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QUESTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF ALL PERSONS SUBJECTED TO ANY FORM OF DETENTION OR IMPRISONMENT, IN PARTICULAR: TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT

United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	ANNUAL REPORTS	1 - 2	2
II.	SOURCES OF FINANCING	3 - 9	2
III.	GRANTS PAID	10 - 12	4
IV.	NEEDS ASSESSMENT	13 - 16	4
V.	GUIDELINES APPLICABLE TO THE MANAGEMENT OF THE FUND	17 - 18	6
VI.	INFORMATION	19 - 24	6

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I. ANNUAL REPORTS

1. In conformity with the arrangements adopted by the General Assembly for the management of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, the Secretary-General draws up an annual report to the General Assembly and, if necessary, the Commission on Human Rights, indicating the funds available, pledges made and contribution received, together with disbursements from the Fund (resolution 36/151 and document A/36/540).

2. At its fifty-second session, in resolution 1996/33 of 19 April 1996 the Commission on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General to continue to keep it informed of the operations of the Fund on an annual basis. The Secretary-General draws the Commission's attention to his annual report on the Fund, submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session (A/51/465), which is available to the Commission, and is supplemented by this report.

II. SOURCES OF FINANCING

Government pledges

3. The pledges mentioned in document A/51/465 as outstanding on 15 September 1996 had not been paid by 15 November 1996.

4. Every year, States participating in the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities receive documentation on the Fund and are invited to make pledges in advance. The pledges are duly recorded and the pledging States notified. At the most recent Conference, held in New York on 4 and 5 November 1996, the following States made pledges to the Fund:

State	Contribution (US$)	Most recent contribution	Year
Algeria	5 000	5 000	1996
Germany	131 579	121 621	1996
Austria	20 000	20 000	1996
Chile	10 000	3 000	1995
Cyprus	1 075	500	1995
Greece	10 300	10 300	1996
Iceland	5 952	5 634	1995
Liechtenstein	8 000	5 691	1996
Luxembourg	12 780	9 490	1996
Monaco	11 741	16 280	1996
Republic of Korea	20 000	10 000	1996
Holy See	1 000	1 000	1988

Contributions received from Governments

5. The following new contributions have been recorded since document A/51/465 was drafted on 15 September 1996:

State	Amount (US$)	Date	No. of previous contributions
Austria	20 000	18 September 1996	12
Belgium	48 076	3 October 1996	6
Kenya	1 000	15 November 1996	4

6. Governments wishing to contribute to the Fund are invited to do so before the next session of the Board of Trustees which is due to he held from 22 to 30 May 1997. Any contribution received after that date will be recorded in the accounts for 1998. In November 1996 the High Commissioner will send a letter to the permanent missions of all States inviting them, as recommended by the General Assembly and the Commission, to contribute regularly to the Fund or, if possible, substantially to increase their contributions.

Contributions from private individuals

7. A regular contributor to the Fund, Mrs. Rita Maran, of Berkeley, United States, paid a sum of US$ 25 on 10 October 1996.

8. Interested Governments, organizations, foundations, enterprises and individuals may pay their contributions into one of the following accounts, specifying "payee: United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims for Torture":

"UN Geneva General Fund", Société de Banque Suisse, B.P. 2770, CH 1211 Genève 2

Account No. CO.590.160.1 in United States dollars, or CO.590.160.0 in Swiss francs;

Chemical Bank, United Nations Headquarters, New York, N.Y. 10017, United States

Account No. 015-004473 in United States dollars.

9. A receipt will be issued for every contribution paid and the contribution will be mentioned in an addendum to this report if it reaches the secretariat by April 1997. After that date, it will appear in the next report to the General Assembly.

III. GRANTS PAID

10. Since the report to the General Assembly was prepared on 15 September 1996, seven grants, amounting to US$ 100,000 have been paid to organizations in respect of programmes selected by the Board of Trustees at its May 1996 session (see A/51/465, table in para. 26). The payments had remained in abeyance pending submission by the organizations of satisfactory descriptive or financial reports or additional information requested by the Fund's Board or secretariat.

11. Each year, the Board recommends that the sum of US$ 100,000 should be earmarked for special allocation between its sessions, in order to provide emergency grants to programmes threatened with suspension through lack of funds or to individual victims of torture for whom no organization can assume responsibility.

12. Since the previous session of the Board, it has been possible to make two emergency grants from this special-allocation account. One of them (US$ 10,000) was paid the Organization, Amigos de los Sobrevivientes, which provides medical, psychological and social assistance to torture victims from Latin America and was experiencing a serious financial crisis. The other grant (US$ 1,500) was used to provide medical treatment for a torture victim from an African country where no suitable assistance is available. This person was evacuated to France and treated in a specialized centre.

IV. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

13. In its resolution 1996/33, the Commission called upon the Board of Trustees of the Fund to report to it at its fifty-third session and present an updated assessment of the global need for rehabilitation services for torture victims and any need for international funding in that respect. The Board wishes to inform the Commission that at present it does not possess the means of realistically assessing the needs for assistance to torture victims in the coming years.

14. International funding for torture victims is essentially provided by the European Union and the Fund. The main international donor is the European Commission; the Fund is second; there are no others. The information received from the European Commission (Multilateral Relations Directorate, Human Rights and Democratization) and taken from the annual reports submitted to the Commission on the aid provided by the European Union is reproduced in the table below. In 1994 and 1995, the grants provided by the European Commission were charged to the following budget chapter: "Support for rehabilitation centres for torture victims and for organizations offering concrete help to victims of human rights violations". The report for 1996 will be available at the beginning of 1997.

	Grants requested	Amount available	Grants awarded	% granted	Additional amount required
1995	8 410 505 ECUs (US$ 10 689 508)	5 000 000 ECUs (US$ 6 354 855)	5 000 000 ECUs (US$ 6 354 855)	59.4%	3 410 505 ECUs (US$ 4 334 653)
1994	4 350 000 ECUs (US$ 5 528 724)	2 000 000 ECUs (US$ 2 541 942)	2 000 000 ECUs (US$ 2 541 942)	45.9%	2 350 000 ECUs (US$ 2 986 782)
1993			475 000 ECUs (US$ 603 711)		

15. The following information concerns the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture:

	Grants requested	Grants awarded	% granted	Additional amount required
1996	US$ 5 618 645	US$ 2 535 500	45.1%	US$ 3 083 145
1995	US$ 5 827 645	US$ 2 719 680	46.6%	US$ 3 107 965
1994	US$ 5 476 959	US$ 3 698 080	67.5%	US$ 1 778 879
1993	US$ 5 289 413	US$ 2 111 880	39.9%	US$ 3 177 533

16. Each year, the grants awarded correspond to the total amounts which the Board of Trustees is able to recommend to the Secretary-General for allocation. In view of the insufficient contributions received (see table above), the Board avoids the practice of carrying forward a reserve from one year to the next. The Secretary-General follows this recommendation by the Board. On average, the Fund is only able to allocate less than 50 per cent of the total amount requested. The organizations subsidized by the Fund have to seek the necessary additional funds elsewhere. They are duly informed of this by the secretariat of the Fund as soon as they submit their first request for funding. In the light of the above information, international funding requirements for 1995 amounted to approximately US$ 7.5 million. It may be assumed that this represented a minimum requirement for 1996 and that it will probably increase in 1997. As regards the Fund, the annual contributions needed amount to between 5 and 6 million dollars; consequently, the current level of contributions needs to be doubled.

V. GUIDELINES APPLICABLE TO THE MANAGEMENT OF THE FUND

17. In paragraph 19 of its resolution 1996/33, the Commission on Human Rights, restating the terms of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action regarding technical cooperation, requested the Secretary-General "to ensure strict and transparent project management rules for the Fund".

18. The Fund does not manage projects; it receives "voluntary contributions for distribution" (General Assembly resolution 36/151). Since it was established in 1981, strict rules have applied to this mandate to receive and distribute voluntary contributions. In addition to the arrangements adopted by the General Assembly for the management of the Fund, referred to in paragraph 1 above, it is also subject to the Financial Regulations of the United Nations, the administrative procedures and principles applicable to the management of voluntary funds, the guidelines applicable to human rights assistance funds (see A/48/520, annex III) and the guidelines adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Fund, which the Board supplements each year if necessary. The latter guidelines are available in the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/520) prepared by the secretariat at the request of the Commission on Human Rights; this contains a report on the Fund's first 10 years of activity (guidelines for organizations on how to apply for grants (appendix II); guidelines for organizations on how to report on the use of grants (appendix IV); guidelines prepared by the Fund (appendix V)). A summary of the guidelines appears in annex III to document A/49/484. The Board of Trustees has adopted no further guidelines since then. At its most recent session, the Board, at the suggestion of a member, decided to revise and update all of its guidelines. A preliminary draft should be ready for consideration by the Board at its next session.

VI. INFORMATION

19. All contributions received since 1981 and disbursements to organizations have been referred to in the annual reports to the General Assembly and to the Commission on Human Rights.

20. In April 1996 an information meeting with representatives of contributing States was organized under the chairmanship of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

21. In May 1996, following their annual session (see A/51/465), the members of the Board of Trustees of the Fund in turn met with the representatives of regular or potential contributing States.

22. Any interested State receives all the relevant documentation and information available to the secretariat of the Fund.

23. In conformity with Economic and Social Council decision 1996/263 of 23 July 1996, the Fund secretariat will organize an information meeting in 1997 for interested member States and at least two meetings for interested organizations on the occasion of the annual sessions of the Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission.

24. The organization, as suggested by the Economic and Social Council in decision 1996/263, paragraph (a), of an annual information meeting for organizations directly concerned by the projects financed by the Fund would entail the provision of air tickets and per diem for the organizations' representatives, because these organizations possess limited financial resources and most of them are not represented in Geneva. In addition to the direct permanent contact maintained by the Fund secretariat with these organizations throughout the year, and the indirect contacts maintained through United Nations agencies, funds or programmes in the field, whenever representatives of the organizations pass through Geneva, notably during sessions of the Board of Trustees or the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission, they regularly meet with the members of the Board of Trustees if it is in session in Geneva, or with the secretariat for any necessary consultation. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees also does his utmost to visit, once a year, a country where a number of projects are financed by the Fund, in order to gain a better understanding of the needs of victims and personally to assess the projects.

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